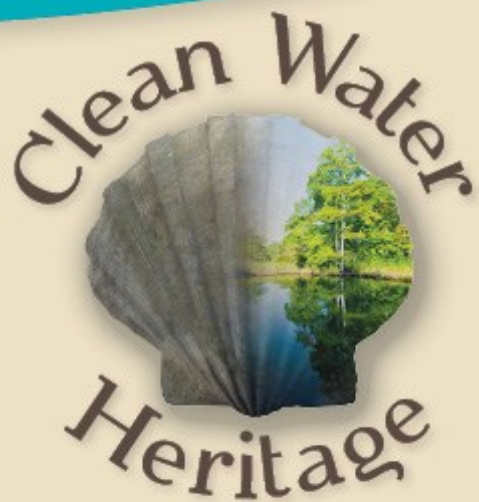


# 2015 Gordon Creek Watershed



## Water Quality Report



## Restore & Protect

[www.jamescitycountyva.gov/857/Stormwater](http://www.jamescitycountyva.gov/857/Stormwater)

## **James City County Water Quality Strategies**

As part of a long term commitment to environmental stewardship, James City County volunteers and staff have been gathering information about stream health throughout the County since 2008. The goal of collecting water quality information is to be able to identify emerging water quality problems, target areas for restoration and preservation, document improvements from citizen and County actions and provide educational and volunteer opportunities for the public.

Volunteers and staff collect two types of data: one looks at the types of small creatures that live in streams and the other provides an indication of the amount of harmful bacteria present in a stream. Together, this information provides evidence of the overall health of the County's waterways.

The following information is a summary of known water quality conditions in the County, gleaned from data collected by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, from the County's volunteer water monitoring program and from completed James City County watershed management plans. As more information becomes available, this report will be updated.

## **Gordon Creek Watershed**

The Gordon Creek Watershed in James City County is considered a rural forested and small tidal watershed, with 41% of the land in a Resource Protection Area, and 17% of the watershed publicly-owned. Current habitat assessments for most of Gordon Creek have been rated as "excellent" in terms of how well it should sustain life. Although this watershed is 86% forested, it has seen some development in the last few years, including two elementary schools, one middle school and the creation of Freedom Park and Interpretive Center. Chickahominy Riverfront Park is situated on the mouth of Gordon Creek and provides kayaks and boat launches for recreation opportunities.

## **Water Quality Conditions**

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VADEQ) has Gordon Creek listed as polluted for enterococcus bacteria. The presence of this bacteria indicates that people may get sick if they ingest water from it, so swimming advisories are in effect. In 2012 when the bacteria levels began to exceed state standards, Gordon Creek was put on Virginia's impaired waters list.

Through the Stormwater Division's Water Quality Monitoring Program and the efforts of County staff and citizen volunteers, monitoring results show that, overall, Gordon Creek water quality ranges from unacceptable to acceptable. The last monitoring performed in the watershed indicated a marginally acceptable level, but monitoring has been hampered by beaver activity in the area, changing flowing streams into ponds. Further sampling should indicate the direction the trend is taking.

## **Problems in the Watershed**

Bacterial pollution is inhibiting recreation activities in Gordon Creek.

## **Completed Studies and Plans**

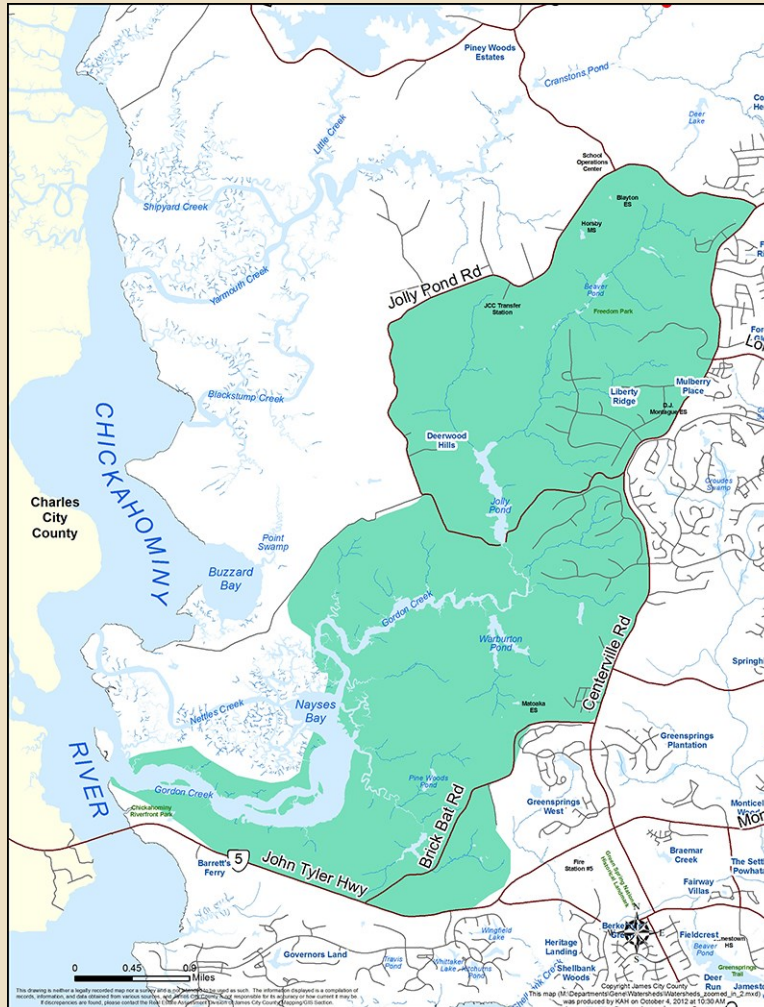
- Gordon Creek Watershed Management Plan (VHB, 2011)
- The Gordon Creek Baseline Assessment and Conservation Area Report (CWP, 2008)
- Jolly Pond Dam Alternatives Analysis (Timmons Group, 2008)

## **What Can Citizens Do?**

- Clean up after your pet. Pet waste contains bacteria and viruses that are harmful to people and the environment.
- Fertilize properly. Learn about your soil and the type of grass in your yard to make a responsible fertilizing plan. Contact Turf Love at 757-564-2170 for help in identifying your yard needs.

- Leave a natural plant buffer around streams or stormwater ponds. Vegetation filters pollutants before they get to the water.
- Don't put fats and oils down the drain. Fatty deposits build up in the sewer system and can lead to sanitary sewer overflows, leaving harmful bacteria and viruses in the environment.
- Wash your car on the grass, not on pavement. Soap and grease will be filtered through the grass and soil before getting into groundwater.
- Plant a rain garden. These beautiful landscaped areas can act as a trap for rain water and can prevent erosion in areas where there is a lot of stormwater run-off.
- Power-wash with care. Look for cleaning products with environmentally-friendly ingredients.
- Don't put leaves and yard clippings in road ditches or on top of storm-drain inlets. Collect leaves and clippings for compost or drop off at a County transfer station.
- Go to [askhrgreen.org](http://askhrgreen.org) for more helpful ideas.

## Gordon Creek Watershed Map



## For More Information

If you are interested in more information, go to [jamestownva.gov/cleanwater](http://jamestownva.gov/cleanwater) or call 757-259-1446.

James City County continues to be proactive in the protection and preservation of natural resources in its commitment to create and sustain a quality community. Remember...caring for our natural resources requires a team effort. Together, we can make sure water quality in Gordon Creek Watershed is protected for generations to come.